

WARREN STONE HOUSE
(Magnolia Crest)
County Highway 40
Burkville vicinity
Lowndes County
Alabama

HABS No. A1-889

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ALA
43-BURK.V.
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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Southeast Region
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WARREN STONE HOUSE (Magnolia Crest) HABS NO. AL-889

Location: The Warren Stone House is located on the south side of County Highway 40, 1.4 km west of County Highway 37 in Lowndes County, Alabama.

Present Owner: General Electric - Montgomery Project
Lowndes County Road 40, Route 1, Box 9-D
Burkville, Alabama 36725

Present Occupant: General Electric - Montgomery Project

Present Use: Office

Significance: The Warren Stone House is a two-story frame structure built ca. 1840. It was the center of a large antebellum plantation in Lowndes County and home of the prominent Stone family. It is a fine example of a Greek Revival style plantation house of the 19th century.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date(s) of erection: Ca. 1840. Warren Stone received a land patent to this property in 1825 and became a prominent planter of Lowndes County. The imposing two-story Greek Revival house is the largest constructed in this area of Lowndes County and its characteristics suggest a ca. 1840 date. The house is mentioned in Warren Stone's 1848 will.
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The chain of ownership for all properties in the Burkville Multiple Resource Area is incomplete due to incomplete county records. The following is the most complete chronological progression possible according to identifiable deed and will records. Reference is to the Clerk's office in the Lowndes County Courthouse in Hayneville, Alabama.

1825 Land patent recorded April 4, 1825. Patent number 462, Vol. 118, p. 422. Patent of 159 acres granted to Warren Stone.

- 1866 Deed November 11, 1866, Book E, page 795
Warren T. Stone
to
Sherbourne Eaton and John Harris
- 1876 Deed Book K, page 381
John Harris
to
Dennis McCarty
- 1900 Deed June 27, 1900, Book T, page 251
Mrs. Dennis McCarty
to
Eli Robinson
- 1937 Will, Book E, page 275
A. Pickett Robinson
to
George M. Reese
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Not known.
5. Original plans and construction: None located.
6. Alterations and additions: The house was given Italianate brackets (in pairs over the front porch columns) during the third quarter of the 19th century. An earlier rear porch was removed and a new one story addition constructed (ca. 1975). At this time the interior was renovated and substantial changes made to the southwest first floor room and to the entire second floor.

B. Historical Context:

The property known as the Stone Plantation was granted to Warren Stone in 1825. Stone was the son of John Stone who fought in the Revolutionary War. Warren Stone and his son Barton Stone both received land patents for property in northeast Lowndes County and they moved here during the 1820s and began farming. Both families are listed in the 1830 census as possessing property in northeast Lowndes County. The Stone family is listed on the 1840 as having seven members in the household.

The early years of the Stone plantation appear to have been marked by rapid prosperity and the large two-story Greek Revival structure was constructed during these years. Upon Warren Stone's death in 1848 his estate was one of the largest in this section of Lowndes County and was surpassed only by the neighboring McQueen Plantation. His will records an estate composed of 1,040 acres, 42 slaves, a cotton gin and substantial holdings of livestock. The value of this estate was estimated at over

\$30,000 and was inherited by his son, Warren T. Stone. In 1843 Warren T. Stone had married Susan Graves of the neighboring Graves plantation and together they had several children and continued to increase the size and value of the plantation. The 1855 census records the Stone plantation as having 66 slaves which was well above the county average of 12 per household.

The Civil War had a profound effect on the Stone family and in 1866 Warren T. Stone was forced to sell the plantation to businessmen from Ohio. Stone and his family then moved away from Lowndes County. The estate was bought and resold in a confusing series of transactions over the next several years. Interests and partial interests are recorded as being purchased by various families until the plantation was bought by the McCarty family in 1876. During the next several decades the land was used for cotton production utilizing the tenant and sharecropper systems. Upon the sale of the land by the McCarty family in 1900 the estate consisted of 1,660 acres.

In 1900 the property was acquired by the Eli Robinson family who occupied the Stone house. Robinson and his sons were prominent landowners of the early 20th century and possessed part of the old neighboring Graves plantation during these years. The house passed into the hands of Eli Robinson's son, Pickett Robinson, who in turn, passed the property to his adopted son Marlow Reese. The house has remained intact throughout its history and still retains its original architectural character.

The Stone cemetery is an important element of the site and is located near the house. Its recorded use spans the years between 1832 and 1910 and contains at least thirty-two graves. Among those buried in the cemetery are Warren Stone and his wife Martha, wives and children of Warren T. Stone and wives and children of Barton Stone.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: An excellent example of the Greek Revival architectural style popular during the period of plantation house construction, the Stone House utilized the Doric order for its formal two-story integral front porch. The classical detailing is carried through by a continuous entablature around the main body of the house. The Stone House has a formal Georgian style central hall plan with paired rooms to either side.

2. Condition of fabric: The house is in excellent condition having been well-maintained by a series of owners and has recently undergone an extensive interior renovation.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The principal elevation is five bays wide and two stories tall. The main body of the house, including the front porch, is approximately 50' wide by 45' deep. The rear one story addition is approximately 46' wide by 14' deep.
2. Foundations: The foundation originally consisted of brick piers. These piers have been joined by open weave panels of brick to form a relatively continuous perimeter foundation.
3. Walls: The exterior siding throughout consists of wood clapboards exposed 5-1/2". Cornerboards 4 to 4-1/2" wide are found on the main body of the house while wood Doric pilasters are used to subdivide the rear addition wall into panels of windows and clapboard siding.
4. Structural system, framing: Heavy timber frame of post and beam construction (no dimensions were taken as this frame was not exposed anywhere). Members are most likely joined by mortise and tenon with wood pegs.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The front porch consists of a two-story six column Doric colonnade with a fully developed dentilled entablature. The fluted columns sit on simple round bases (either replacing earlier bases or indicating repairs to the bottoms of the columns as a result of wood deterioration). The wood plank floor of the porch is 8' wide by the full width of the house. There is a cantilevered second floor balcony that is 4' deep and the width of the central hallway. It is supported on four decorative cast iron brackets which, in turn, support a cast iron framework covered with wood planks. This porch has a balustrade consisting of decoratively sawn flat planks and a handrail.

A recessed porch is found in the middle of the rear addition to the house. This porch has a wood plank floor and is enclosed by rooms on either side. The rear door of the central hallway opens directly onto this porch.

6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys on each side of the house. These are internal end wall chimneys, completely faced by the clapboard siding and only appearing as brick stacks with corbelled caps above the roof level.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance to the house consists of a well-detailed Doric order surround with flanking pilasters and an entablature. The single two-panel door is flanked by sidelights (each with three lights over a wood panel). The door and sidelights are separated by bracketed and chamfered pilasters and topped by a transom consisting of a single light over each sidelight and a pair of lights over the door. The transom bar moulding over the door has been installed as a series of dentils.

The door to the second floor balcony above the main entrance is of similar design and arrangement of surround, sidelights and transom, but has been appropriately scaled down in size and detail. Likewise the rear entrance to the central hall has a similar door, sidelight, and transom arrangement.

- b. Windows and shutters: The windows of the main house are either of 6-over-6 or 6-over-9 design and have three panel fixed louver shutters. All window surrounds consist of flat boards that are 4-1/2" wide on the side windows and 6-1/4" wide on the front windows. The front first floor windows have slightly pedimented lintels. Elsewhere the lintels are flat and are topped by a drip mould. The windows of the rear addition are 8-over-8 with flat trim and lintels.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main house is covered by a low pitch hip roof that is sheathed with asphalt shingles cut to imitate wood shakes. The rear addition has a low-pitch semi-hip roof with identical asphalt shingles.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The eaves consist of a continuous entablature around the entire house with a moderately projecting cornice. Italianate paired brackets have been installed over each of the columns of the front porch. Ogee

gutters have been added to the eaves. (Downspouts have been added around the perimeter, including the north side of the corner columns.)

- c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: The hip roof is truncated near the peak and has a continuous railing as a widow's walk or balustrade. The design of this railing is identical to that of the second floor balcony.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First floor: This floor is a typical formal central hall plan with pairs of rooms flanking the hall. This plan has been extended in the rear addition where the central hall becomes a center porch enclosed on either side by single story rooms.
- b. Second floor: The central hall plan is followed as well on this floor with two bedrooms to either side of the hallway.

2. Stairways: A single U-shaped stairway is found in the central hall. The stairway consists of an initial run of 15 treads (11" wide) and 16 risers (7" tall) to a landing. On the return are 6 treads and 7 risers. The railing consists of a heavy turned newel at the base and turned balusters in the railing.

3. Flooring: Refinished wood floors are found in the central hall, the dining room (northwest), and pair of parlors (east). These consist of 5-1/2" wide boards, with the exception of the hallway where they are 5-3/4" wide. In the kitchen (southwest) and breakfast room (addition to southwest) vinyl tile has been installed. In the southeast addition wall-to-wall carpet has been installed. The stairway has a center carpet runner and the second floor is fully carpeted.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls and ceilings have been redone with drywall throughout the house. A chairrail and ceiling cornice have been installed in the southeast room. A ceiling cornice has also been installed in the kitchen, and a small ceiling medallion has been installed in the dining room. Ceiling cornices have been installed in all of the second floor bedrooms.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Interior room doors are a four panel design and are generally 3'-1-1/2" wide and 7'-4-3/4" high. These dimensions appear to vary by 1/4" in each direction. The front entrance door (with its vertical two panel design) is 3'-7" wide by 7'-11-1/2" tall and has a grained finish. The sidelights are an additional 1'-6" wide, while the transom is an additional 1'-9-1/2" high. The door to the second floor balcony is a four panel design that is 3'-3" wide by 7'-5-3/4" tall. (All new doors introduced to the house are of a six panel design.)
- b. Windows: Several window types are used for this house. On the first floor 6-over-9 sash are used on the north wall of the dining room and living room. These openings are 3'-4" wide and 9'-6" tall, the lower sill set 6" above the floor and the lower sash being 5'-10" tall. Other windows on the first floor of the main body of the house are 6-over-6 design and are 3'-4" wide by 7'-8" tall. The windows of the rear addition are of 8-over-8 design and are 3'-4" wide by 7'-10-1/2" tall.

On the second floor all windows are of six-over-six design and are 3'-4" wide by 7'-2-1/2" tall.

6. Decorative features and trim: Baseboards 8" high are found throughout the house (reworked to fit the new room configurations on the second floor). The major decorative detailing is found in the two designs for interior window and door surrounds. In each case the trim of the jambs tapers upward, varying from 7-1/4" to 6-1/4", to 8-1/2" to 7-1/2".

Basic pediment lintels are found over the doors and windows throughout the original openings of the second floor, and the openings in the kitchen (southwest) and east parlors on the first floor. This pediment is topped by a simple crown mould and projects slightly past the jamb trim, forming an approximation of the classical shouldered architrave.

Elsewhere on the first floor a more elaborate design for the surround is used. This consists of a deep shoulder curving inwards to the jamb and forming part of the lintel in the center of which it curves upward to support a series of mouldings. The flat

boards of the surround have a raised 2-1/4" wide trim strip at the outer edge and at the center of the lintel is a decorative flat scroll-work design. This surround design enframes the entire door, side-light, transom configuration of the first floor front and rear entrances. The entry doors on the main floor and to the second floor balcony are grained.

Appropriate mantles, simple in design, survive in the dining room and front parlor. The fireplaces in the kitchen and rear parlor have been reconstructed in a contemporary manner with exposed brick. On the second floor all mantles have been removed and small simple openings retained for the fireplaces. These have no mantles.

7. Hardware: Contemporary hardware has been installed throughout the house.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation: The house has been retrofit with a central HVAC system that supplies the first floor through floor grilles and the second floor through ceiling grilles.
 - b. Lighting: The house has been entirely rewired and new ceiling fixtures installed throughout.
 - c. Plumbing: Completely new plumbing has been installed for the kitchen and for four bathrooms (one on the first floor and three on the second floor).

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Stone House is oriented north towards County Highway 40 and is sited approximately 70 meters south of this road.
2. Historic landscape design: There is no surviving evidence of any formal landscape planting related to the house. Traces of a semicircular drive approaching the front of the house may have historic precedent, but currently relate to recent (late 20th century) site improvements. Other than a large magnolia tree and several other major trees randomly sited on the broad front lawn, there is a small pecan grove just east of the house. The majority of the landscape elements date from the 20th century, including substantial foundation plantings around the house itself. The foundation plantings

partially conceal the exterior air conditioning condenser units on the east and west sides as well as the new electrical installation on the west side.

3. Outbuildings: Several 20th century outbuildings, constructed since 1963 (the date of an existing aerial photograph of the house site), exist to the west and south of the house. Approximately 100 meters to the west is a small shed, most likely relocated here from another site. To the south of the house at a distance of approximately 150 meters exist a concrete silo, a small brick shed, and a sheet metal clad maintenance structure.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: None.
- B. Early Views: 1963 aerial (kept in the house). This shows an earlier rear shed roof porch and outbuildings.
- C. Interviews:

Shreiner, Mrs. Charles. Burkville, Alabama. August 19, 1983.
- D. Bibliography:
 1. Primary and unpublished sources

Alabama State Census 1855. Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Lowndes County Deed, Inventory, Marriage, Minute and Will Records 1830-1983. Lowndes County Courthouse, Hayneville, Alabama.

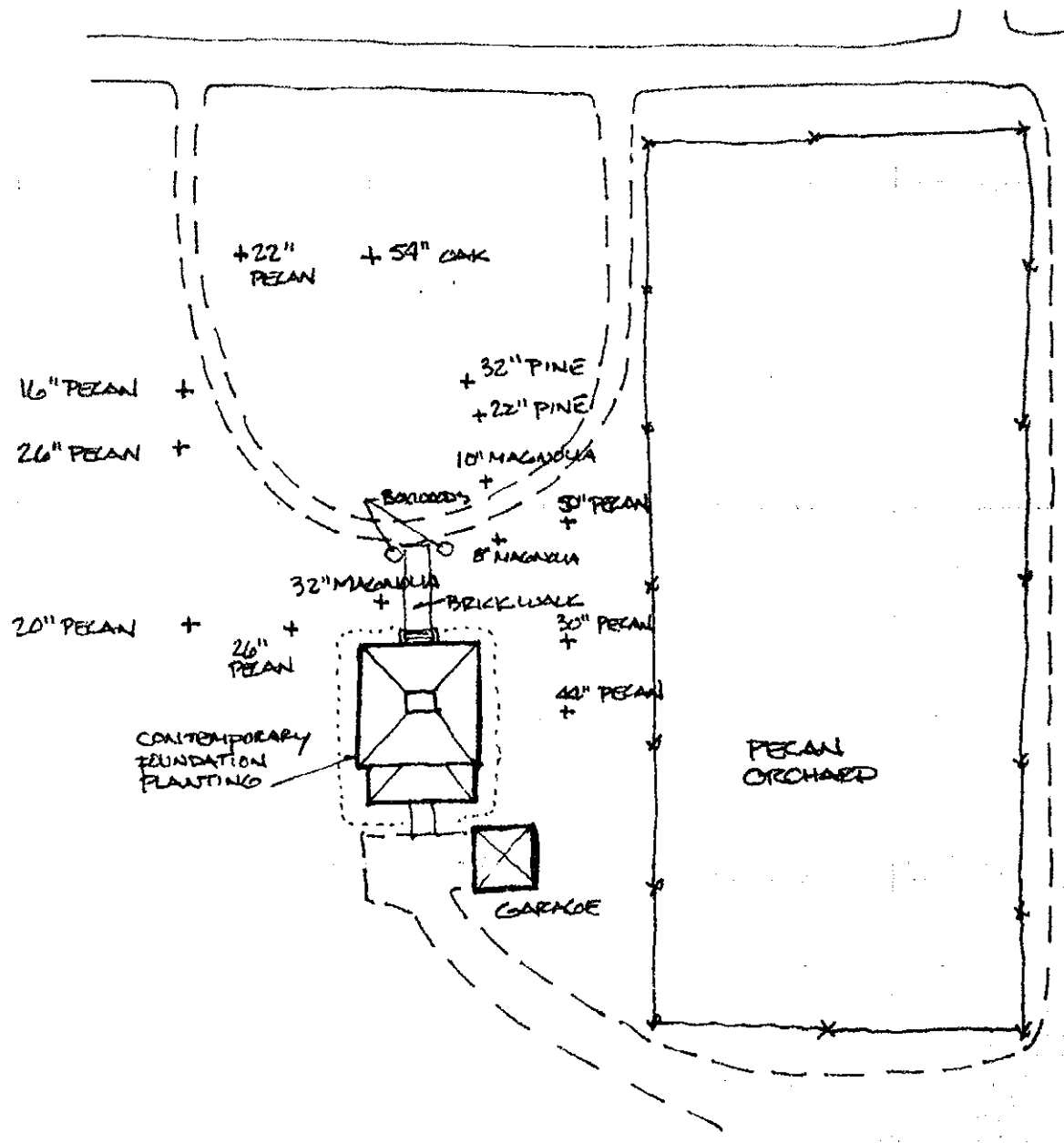
United States Census Records, 1830, 1840, 1850, 1860.
- E. Supplemental Material: Additional historical/genealogical information on file with The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology, Inc. August - September 1983

Prepared by: Michael Emrick, Historical Architect and Philip Thomason, Architectural Historian
The Ehrenkrantz Group/Building Conservation Technology
August - September 1983

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This recording project was conducted by The Ehrenkrantz Group/ Building Conservation Technology, of Nashville, Tennessee under contract from Environmental Research and Technology, Inc. for General Electric - Montgomery Project, Burkville, Alabama.

Project personnel included Michael Emrick, Project Architect (project coordination, architectural data); James Thompson, Architect (measured drawings and sketch plans); Philip Thomason, project historian; and Barry Starkey, photographer. Agency involvement included the Mobile District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Southeast Regional Office of the National Park Service.



STONE HOUSE

LANDSCAPE PLAN

